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Special  
Awards Issue

# Inside APHIS

Vol. 14 No. 6

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Nov/Dec 1994

## Department Celebrates Excellence With Honor Awards

Employees from all over the Washington, DC, Metropolitan Area gathered on the National Mall on September 12 to watch Secretary Espy present major Departmental awards to groups and individuals during a "Celebration of Excellence." APHIS employees applauded loudly

their awardees, including an ADC employee, four PPQ groups and a group from BBEP.

On the morning of the ceremony, APHIS employees gathered early in the Secretary's dining room for breakfast and to receive Acting Administrator Lonnie King's

congratulations. During this time, awardees also had a chance to meet and talk with each other. A hearty barbecue picnic luncheon followed the Departmental ceremony; special guest Willie Nelson was present to provide musical entertainment. ♦

## New Rearing Facility Started With a Common Vision

### Honor Award

Although they worked in an old kitchen-like facility for the production of sterile pink bollworms, the members of the Pink Bollworm Rearing Facility Vision committee had a vision of what a state-of-the-

art sterile-insect rearing facility could be. They turned that knowledge into the most modern facility of its type in the world today. It stands in Phoenix, AZ, a product of a unique public-private partnership.

Remarkably, the members of this group are not engineers or industrial designers. They are entomologists, biologists, and

insect production specialists. PPQ project leader Fred Stewart and employees Joseph Ploski, Ernest Miller, Antonio Cabarga, Harvey Dennis, Robert Wedgworth, and Robert Saavedra received an honor award for their contributions to the new facility.

Believing that funding for a new facility would be a cooperative effort, several members of the team approached the California Cotton Pest Control Board. The board realized that a new facility could increase production capabilities enough to make possible the elimination of pink bollworm from North America. They acquired the site and modernized the building. APHIS purchased and installed the equipment—an investment less than half of the cost of the \$10 million building.

The members of the group, who worked together at the old facility, knew the problems there well and knew they didn't want the new facility to have those problems. Forming a vision committee, members researched new technology that might improve the production process and incorporated it into the new structure. The changes were many and profound. Instead of cooking up diet medium in steam kettles, employees at the new facility use an automatic twin-screw

(See PINK BOLLWORM on page 3)



APHIS PHOTO

A pink bollworm larva feeds inside a cotton boll, destroying the cotton. Currently, this pest infests much of the Southwestern United States.



# Agency Offers Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments

By Mavis Harrison, Human Resources Operations, M&B

The Secretary's goal to shrink the USDA workforce by reducing supervisory and administrative positions moved forward dramatically in APHIS last month. On October 1, M&B's Human Resources Division (HRD) informed 130 employees that the agency was extending them voluntary separation incentive payments or buyouts. These employees were among the 327 who applied for the buyouts during the July application window.

The intent of the buyout in APHIS was to reduce positions in conformance with the National Performance Review (NPR) recommendations for more streamlined

and effective Government. After the decision by the APHIS management team (AMT) to offer buyouts, HRD provided several options for determining priorities. The AMT chose to give the highest priority to headquarters employees in supervisory, administrative positions at Grade 15 or equivalent. The lowest priority was nonadministrative, nonsupervisory employees below Grade 14.

To ensure that USDA agencies began to reduce their rolls, the Department lowered the number of ceilings for each agency through the end of fiscal year (FY) 1995. In APHIS, the ceiling reduction for FY 1994 was 60, and the reduction for FY 1995 was 70, with a total reduction of 455 positions by 1999. The total reductions were revised later to 647. The number of buyouts offered equaled the FY 1994-95 ceiling-reduction totals.

Of the 130 employees receiving offers, about a third were eligible for early retirement. Five employees volunteered to resign and take the buyout, and the remainder were employees who met age and service requirements for optional retirement. All employees who accepted the buyout offer had to be off the agency's rolls by November 3.

HRD had requested an additional early-out authority from the Department separate from the buyout authority. This additional option, it was felt, would give employees close to retirement the opportunity to leave if they were interested. However, the Department only approved early-out authority for use with the buyout authority.

Will APHIS participate in future buyouts, or similar authorities? The future is impossible to predict, of course, but there are no plans to offer additional buyouts. The Department's reorganization will undoubtedly affect placement and number of employees at all sites. Because we do not yet have the details of the reorganization, we can't offer a more specific answer at this time. ♦

## Number of Buyout Offers

Plant Protection and Quarantine—50  
Veterinary Services—48  
Animal Damage Control—7  
International Services—6  
Management and Budget—6  
Policy and Program Development—6  
Biotechnology, Biologics and Environmental Protection—2  
Regulatory Enforcement and Animal Care—2  
Legislative and Public Affairs—1  
Office of the Administrator—1  
Recruitment and Development—1

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Six years ago I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Since then, I have spent most of my time in full remission and working productively for APHIS, both in Hyattsville, MD, and since 1991, in Miami, FL. This year, unhappily, I suffered a major setback as an aftereffect of a pregnancy and found myself in need of donated leave. That is where my friends in APHIS came to the rescue.

I was able to stay on leave and in pay status for the entire time it took me to get back on my feet (4 months after my own leave ran

out). I still can't believe my good fortune to know so many generous and loving people. Those who know me will find it hard to believe that I am overwhelmed to the point of having been rendered speechless. Well, almost.

Truly, though, I am very, very grateful for the incredible response to my problem. I can't imagine a better group of people to work with and have as friends. Thanks to all of you; thanks for all of you.

Maria Cristina Nieto-Menendez  
PPQ; Miami, FL

## Inside APHIS

*Inside APHIS* is published by:  
Legislative and Public Affairs  
Room 606, Federal Building  
6505 Belcrest Road  
Hyattsville, Md. 20782.  
Phone: (301) 436-7257

The opinions expressed in letters to the editor or articles do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of the agency. APHIS reserves the right to edit for reasons of space and style.

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## PINK BOLLWORM from page 1

extruder system that can produce diet continuously. Four people now perform a task that formerly required 11. Formaldehyde, a carcinogenic chemical, is no longer used in the diet mix. The new system maintains homogeneous, microbiologically sterile conditions during production, eliminating the potential for pathogenic contamination of the breeding colony.

The insect packaging system was converted from a paper-can system to a technology that uses a form-fill machine to produce a thin plastic-film container. The new container has reduced packaging costs, handling time, and rearing space. The group developed an electronic actuation system to remove insect scales from rearing boxes. They implemented a low-pressure steam annihilation system to assure that no insects would escape from the facility during the cleaning cycle. The former system used a freeze-kill technique that took over 9 hours.

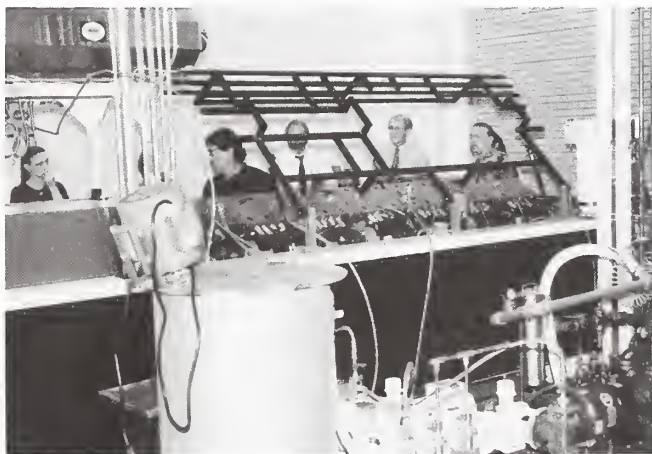
Now the process takes only minutes and uses no toxic materials that could harm the environment.

The group employed professional help only in the design of the air-handling and filtration system required to remove insect scales from the air. These tiny scales, nearly invisible to the naked eye, can cause an asthmalike

reaction in people breathing air contaminated with them. The problem was solved with high-efficiency, self-cleaning filters.

By redesigning the rearing racks, the group has almost doubled usable space in the facility. To reduce the risk of overexposure to ultraviolet light and improve efficiency of moth collection, the group installed fiber-optic rearing systems that cut the light bulbs needed for the rearing boxes to 1/15 of previous levels.

These and other innovations have increased production capacity to over four times that of the previous facility, eliminating the use of toxic chemicals for the control of pink bollworm in the San Joaquin Valley in California, and making an eradication program possible for the first time. The achievements of this group are a reflection of the personal and professional excellence of its members and their dedication to the APHIS mission. ♦



APHIS PHOTO BY LARRY HAWKINS

Guests at the formal dedication of the pink bollworm rearing facility pause at the twin-screw extruder, the new diet-making machine. The cylinder in the foreground houses vitamins that will be pumped into the extruder and mixed with diet ingredients.

## Employees With Disabilities Find Support in DWRC Office

### Honor Award

Phyllis Parker, a biological science technician at ADC's Denver Wildlife Research Center (DWRC), received an equal opportunity award for her devotion to the idea that each of us can help provide opportunity to others.

Her long commitment to providing equal opportunity for others has been directed specifically to people with disabilities. Years ago, as a technician for the Agricultural Research Service, Parker wanted to hire a deaf person. However, no one in the office could communicate with deaf people. Parker took training in sign language to make employing this person feasible.

At DWRC, Parker accepted a collateral duty assignment as one of the equal employment opportunity representatives for DWRC and ADC. At present, she serves as the Special Emphasis Program Manager for people with disabilities for ADC. Very recently, her knowledge of sign language made it possible for DWRC to hire a deaf employee.

As a result of Parker's encouragement, assistance, and efforts in recruitment, her unit of DWRC is widely diverse, with three of five employees classified as disabled. Parker's awareness and understanding of the untapped abilities of the disadvantaged is first-hand knowledge. She has provided care in her home for her seriously disabled sister for many years. ♦



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

ADC's Phyllis Parker meets with Acting Administrator Lonnie King on the day of the Departmental awards ceremony.

# "BIG" Annual Training Conference in Washington

By Claire Louis, Executive Correspondence, LPA

More than 3,000 Federal, State, and local government employees representing 22 States and the District of Columbia came together this past August for the Blacks in Government (BIG) sixteenth annual training conference in Washington, DC. This year's conference, whose theme was "Yesterday's Dream, Today's Reality, Tomorrow's Hope," began with a plenary session, at which first-time and veteran participants welcomed each other, exchanging pledges to support, recognize, and respect each other's individual talents.

The highlight of the opening session came in the keynote address by Jim Vance, a news anchorman at a D.C. television station WRC-TV. During his address, Vance reminisced about being invited to speak at the third annual BIG conference. He later related the story of his son getting shot at a local carryout restaurant in a case of mistaken identity. "My son is all right now," Vance said, and then went on to stress the importance of African Americans making a commitment to reducing violence in their communities.

## Workshops and Forums

Following the opening session, conference participants attended a variety of concurrent workshops centered around career and personal development interests. The workshop presenters were, for the most part, current or former Government employees who were able to relate easily to conference attendees. Some of the workshops presented were Career Exploration and Planning; Reviewing Your Options, presented by Dan J. Rondeau, director of the Office of Civil Rights at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Nile Valley Contributions to Civilization, presented by founder and Director of the Institute of Karmic Guidance, Anthony T. Browder; and Diversity Assessment: Key to Organizational Effectiveness, presented by Marilyn Gowing, director of the Office of Personnel Research and Development with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management in Washington, DC. Other workshops covered topics such as computer literacy, crime reduction in the African-American community, financial planning, and AIDS in the African-American community.

## Personal Experience

For me, a black employee new to APHIS, the BIG conference was particularly meaningful. It gave me a chance to meet other people in the area who were also black and in government, and to explore and discuss work-related and personal experiences that affect minority government employees. I returned from the weeklong conference revitalized and made a few friends in the process.

## Special Events

Conference participants could also choose from a calendar of special events that included a gospel extravaganza, a talent and fashion show, a luncheon forum with members of the Congressional Black Caucus, and a moonlight cruise aboard the Spirit of Washington. Additional conference events included an employment exchange with representatives from more than 20 Government agencies, an exhibits hall with various crafts and artwork for sale, and a closing plenary session, with a keynote address given by Mae Jemison, a scientist with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the first African-American woman to go into space.

## Closing Session

In her address, Jemison spoke about the forces that helped her to achieve her goals, including her family and her community, stressing the importance of these institutions to the achievement of the next generation of African-American leaders. She also emphasized the need for today's African-American professionals to "give back to their communities." ♦

## Facts About BIG

BIG was founded in 1975 by African-American Federal employees in the then Department of Health, Education and Welfare in Rockville, MD, to address the unique problems faced by this population in the

workforce and the community. It is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote equity in all aspects of American life, excellence in public service, and opportunity for all Americans.

Since its national incorporation in 1976, BIG has established more than 170 chapters in 11 regions located in States from Alaska to Florida.



# PPQ Group Finds Solution to Border Cargo Traffic Jams

## Honor Award

PPQ employees working along the U.S.-Mexican border saw the dilemma: Each year, more commercial fruit and vegetable shipments arrived at border ports of entry. Each year, the same number of PPQ officers inspected these shipments to make sure that they were free of dangerous pests and diseases. Each year, inspectors saw to it that infested shipments were treated or returned to Mexico.

PPQ managers knew that with the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement, the workload would increase to the point that PPQ staff would not be able to cope. Adding new facilities along the border and expanding existing facilities were helpful but not the full solution. How to handle an ever-increasing number of shipments with a finite workforce remained a problem.

A group of PPQ employees grappled successfully with the problem, developing a new approach for border cargo release. Receiving an honor award for work on the border cargo program are Phil Garcia, group leader, and Hector Baez, Lisa Davis, Dick Gaspari, Dave Reeves, Manuel Trujillo, Jr., and Dianne Vlasik.

During the last 10 years, employees at ports of entry along the border with Mexico developed various cargo processing systems to deal with increasing volumes of regulated agricultural cargo. The border cargo release group gathered together all of these ideas and used them as a starting point for studying the problem. Then the group conducted a comprehensive analysis of pest interception records. Results of their study confirmed what experienced PPQ border inspectors had already learned—levels of risk vary significantly from commodity to commodity.

The data revealed a clear distinction between high- and low-risk commodities. High-risk shipments were very likely to harbor injurious pests and diseases. Low-risk



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

commodities were extremely unlikely to present a threat to American agriculture. The evaluation also showed that PPQ was devoting the same amount of effort and resources to both low- and high-risk cargo.

The work group estimated that about 230,000 shipments of low-risk commodities entered the United States from Mexico. The solution to border inspection of cargo was in front of them—PPQ had to revise its fruit and vegetable inspection principles and guidelines so that its inspection efforts went to the highest risk shipments—

PPQ's Janis Letourneau talks to a fruit broker about inspection of an incoming shipment of coconuts and bananas at the San Diego border port.

those most likely to harbor dangerous pests and diseases.

Now, low-risk shipments are no longer held up at the border; PPQ releases about 95 percent of these shipments without inspection. Officers randomly inspect the remaining 5 percent to ensure program integrity. PPQ managers now assign their employees to inspect the cargo with the highest pest risk. As a result, PPQ is increasing the probability of intercepting serious pests and diseases before they enter the United States.

A few of PPQ's Canadian border ports of entry have been trying out the new system and have incorporated the new cargo

release principles into their operations. The system works well with Canadian port locations that handle low-risk cargo, such as frozen vegetables. There is also potential for integrating these principles into other air and sea ports.

The employees who developed the border cargo release program found a way for PPQ to respond to challenges to Government's resources while maintaining safeguards and expediting the movement of agricultural products across the border. ♦



# BBEP Group Simplifies Biological Assessment Process

## Honor Award

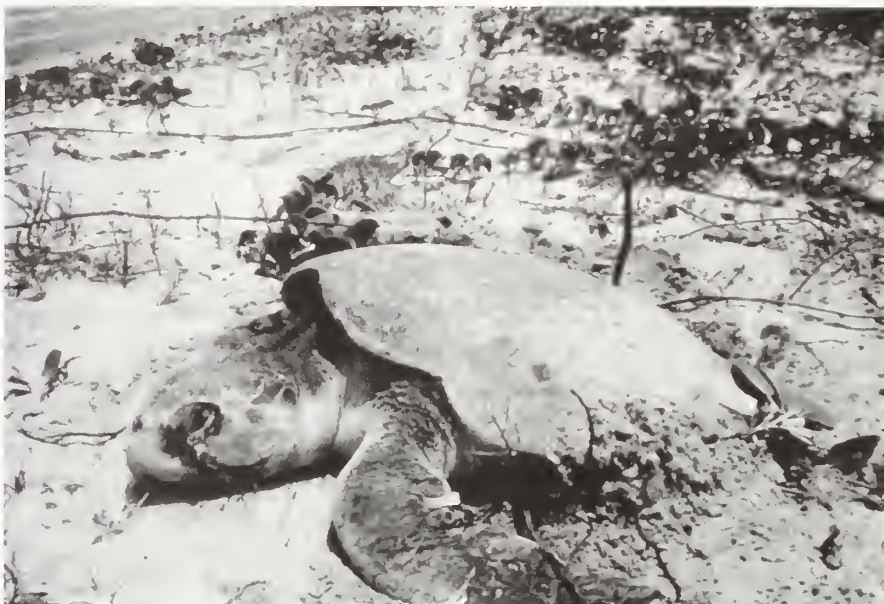
The Endangered Species Act of 1973 requires agencies to ensure that their activities do not jeopardize endangered and threatened species. To meet this requirement, agencies enter into a consultation process with appropriate environmental regulatory groups. A key component of this process is the preparation of biological assessments, a time-consuming exercise that analyzes the potential impacts of a project on listed species.

In the past, BBEP has initiated the biological assessment after APHIS units recognize the need for a site-specific program. Preparing the assessment can take half a year. But when an insidious pest like the Mediterranean fruit fly (Medfly) invades an area, waiting to begin treatments makes eradication difficult and perhaps prohibitively expensive.

The Medfly Biological Assessment group had to find a way APHIS could carry out its mission to eradicate the Medfly in California while protecting endangered and threatened species in the treatment area. BBEP group leader Jack Edmundson; employees Harold Smith, Warren Eastland, and Vicki Wickheiser; and Saginaw, MI, teacher Joe Leach received an honor award for developing and implementing new strategies for biological assessment.

The biological assessment group realized that it needed a new approach for the Medfly program. Many species were involved in a program of its scope, and timetables for treatment needed to be accelerated for the program to be successful. It was clear to the team that the work needed to be streamlined and accomplished early in the process.

The traditional biological assessment process was discarded. Instead, the group worked closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) specifically looking



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PHOTO

The green sea turtle, a threatened species, was one of the animals addressed in the biological assessment for Mediterranean fruit fly (Medfly). In breeding colonies on sandy Florida beaches, the sea turtle is endangered, but these colonies were not in the area of the Medfly program.

for protection measures that could be used across broad geographic areas and still protect the most sensitive and vulnerable species. The group looked for ways to reduce paperwork and unnecessary analysis and for ways to get concurrence early with FWS on protective measures.

One of the key components of the strategy was establishing a central liaison in FWS. In the past, BBEP had to contact each of the seven FWS regions for information. By setting up a single FWS contact, the group saved hours of work. Other new developments for the strategy included an up-to-date data base of endangered and threatened species found in proposed Medfly control areas, organization of these species according to their vulnerabilities to program control methods, and determination of compatible control methods for entire groups of endangered and threatened species. Group members worked closely with FWS to get concurrence on compatible methods and with program managers to get a commitment to abide by the agreed-upon protection measures. The

group depended heavily on close coordination with all affected groups throughout the entire process.

The strategy designed by the group proved highly successful. It resulted in an agreement between the two agencies that the program would have no effect on endangered and threatened species, and this agreement was reached early at the informal stage of the consultation requirements of the Endangered Species Act. The strategy entirely eliminated the need for formal consultation, saving about \$20,000 for the Medfly program the first year. FWS also saved on its costs.

Other programs will be able to use the new strategy to prepare biological assessments. Boll weevil eradication, rangeland grasshopper management, and gypsy moth suppression could all find the strategy helpful. Most importantly, the new strategy better enables APHIS to protect endangered and threatened species while using integrated pest management to accomplish the agency mission. ♦



# Northeastern Region Improves Pest Survey Methods

By Janet Wintermute, Public Affairs, LPA

## Honor Award

Did you know that PPQ port inspectors intercept about 40,000 exotic pests at U.S. ports of entry every year? A couple dozen slip past this first line of defense, enter the country, and become established. The key to dealing with these introductions is rapid detection and identification of pest species from abroad. An interception committee of PPQ Northeastern Region employees and State cooperators received an honor award for their work in improving detection and identification methodology. Committee members include PPQ group leader Ron Johnson and employees Joe Cavey, Terrill Goodman, Raymond Hite, Steve Passoa, Joseph Messineo, Vic Mastro, and Phil Kingsley.

Stakes are high in the race to protect American agriculture from foreign pests. It cost \$165 million to eradicate Florida's outbreak of citrus canker in 1990 and more than \$200 million to eradicate Medfly from California in 1982.

Sharing the results of federally funded information-gathering efforts with State plant regulatory officials is clearly crucial. So the APHIS group made sure to include representation from State departments of agriculture going into the project. The committee used information from APHIS' data base to generate a report about plant pests intercepted from imported goods. But the committee saw a chance to expand the scope of their assignment beyond its original intent. Through the ingenuity and persistence of its members, the group determined that such an analysis could become the basis for designing and implementing more effective exotic plant pests surveys *within the Region*.

First the group determined that biological and economic characteristics of the pests most frequently intercepted could be evaluated to determine the likelihood of any given pest's entering and becoming established in the Northeastern



APHIS PHOTO BY CARLOS MARTINEZ

**At a dunnage pile at Erie, PA, team members Al Wheeler and Steven Passoa examine wood planks for scolytid beetles. A local guide, right, advises the others on the location of nearby host conifers.**

United States. The committee considered these biological characteristics: life stage of the pest when intercepted, feeding method, damage done by the pest, whether it is a vector of disease, its tolerance to winter cold, how often it is intercepted, the destination of the host material on which the organism was found, whether the pest can colonize outside its native range, and whether it is established elsewhere in the United States or Canada.

Economic considerations included whether host plants are widely grown in the Northeast, whether the target pest would have a negative effect on certification of host material for export, and whether the pest's presence would result in regulatory actions by other States or countries. The group also determined whether survey methodology is available to detect the intercepted pests and whether scientific expertise is available to identify them accurately.

As a result of the committee's efforts, the Region implemented a new cooperative exotic pest-detection program to enhance early detection. For the first time, this approach integrated port-of-entry interception data with an exotic-trapping program based on evaluation of the characteristics listed

above. Initial detection efforts targeted the highest priority pests—exotic bark beetles—and identified locations Regionwide where these pests could most likely become established.

Within weeks of initiating a pilot survey, PPQ employees spotted an established population of a pest never before detected in this country. USDA's Forest Service describes this enemy, the spruce bark beetle, as the world's worst exotic forest pest currently established here. But through cooperative Forest Service-APHIS efforts, the Erie, PA, infestation of spruce bark beetle was quickly contained and its source of infestation eliminated.

Could the spruce bark beetle have become America's next Medfly? APHIS experts believe the answer is yes. It could have become established nationwide over time, and, in the timber-producing areas of Oregon and Washington alone, it could have caused losses worth up to \$1.5 billion.

In addition to eliminating this specific threat, the work of the committee also heightened APHIS' awareness of the type of risk assessment conducted for this project. As a result, the Exotic Pest

(See *PEST* on page 13)

# Project Employees End Long-term Work on Citrus Canker

## Honor Award

Last January, Floridians celebrated the culmination of 9 1/2 years of work to save their citrus from disease: the eradication of citrus canker from their State. PPQ employees recognized for their contributions to the eradication effort are group leader John Thomas and Earl Wiley, Mary Tagliarino, Bobby Strickland, Joseph Stewart, Nolen Pendergrast, Loren Carpenter, Minnie Dean, Shirley Frazier, Vesta Kemmerer, Wayne Burnett, Vernon Bridges, Judith Bailey, Glen Lee, Steve Poe, William Butler, Eric Moye, and Margie Shorter.

The Asiatic form of citrus canker, known as the A strain, had

appeared in Florida once before in 1914. During that outbreak, citrus growers learned of the disease's persistence, its damage to leaves, twigs, and fruit, and the ease with which it spreads. They learned also that there was only one way to control the A strain—through the burning of their groves. Growers saw many of their citrus trees destroyed by fire before eradication was achieved in 1933.

In 1985, the disease again appeared. Again, tree-burning was the only method known to destroy it. However, burning was resorted to much less frequently than in the first outbreak, mainly because regulatory, survey, and control actions went into place immediately upon discovery of new areas of infection.

A bacterial disease, canker spreads easily by contact with

insects, animals, people, and equipment. It is also borne along by windy rainstorms and on infected nursery stock.

To contain and eradicate the disease, PPQ joined forces with Florida agricultural officials, scientists, and the citrus industry. They formed a Special Task Force on Citrus Canker, which recommended regulations, control actions, and program directions. A technical advisory committee gave scientific and technical advice to the task force.

Project employees surveyed over 700,000 acres of commercial citrus groves, over 2 million residential properties, and over 1,700 citrus nurseries many times during the 9 1/2 years. They regulated the movement of fruit through 617 packing houses, 116 processors, 3,719 retailers, and 634 other fruit handlers.

When the A strain was discovered on residential properties, the program managers had to expand the regulations to cover lawn maintenance businesses. This group had no stake in the citrus industry and was not easily convinced to comply with safeguards and regulations to prevent the canker from spreading.

Ultimately, though, PPQ and its cooperators destroyed the disease by removing and burning the trees from about 630 acres in 4 commercial groves and from 282 residential properties. Project members also severely cut back all other dooryard citrus trees within 50 feet of a positive tree to kill any undetected canker.

For their sustained and dedicated effort over a 9 1/2-year period, the secretary has honored these PPQ employees. ♦



APHIS PHOTO

A serious disease of citrus, Asian citrus canker damages leaves, twigs, and fruit.



# Red Earth Festival Draws Oklahomans to Tribal Traditions

By Eric Berthelette, Executive Correspondence, LPA



PHOTO BY CARRIE GOERRINGER

As part of the honor guard for the 1994 Red Earth Festival, Comanche Tom Ware leads the way into the Myriad Convention Center at Oklahoma City, OK.

Feathers, beads, buckskin, and ornaments adorned the Native American dance contestants at the annual Red Earth Festival held in the convention center in downtown Oklahoma City, OK. Every June,

amid excitement and swirls of color, dancers move to the pulsating rhythm of the drum. A beat is overlaid by the sound of jingle ornaments sewn on the dancers' regalia and amplified by electronic speakers and blinking sound boards.

A celebration of life, tradition, and heritage, this year's festival proved to be both a cultural and educational experience for several Oklahoma-based APHIS employees who attended the opening-day parade. Ancient traditions and modern technology are melded to create a surprising scene for visitors and photojournalists recording the event. For 3 days, Oklahoma City is swarming with 100,000 visitors gathered to enjoy the talents of some 250 artists and 1,500 dancers representing more than 100 tribes.

More than 1,000 powwows take place in the United States and Canada every year. The largest, the Red Earth Festival, is one stop on the Powwow Trail, a transcontinental circuit of local and regional intertribal celebrations. A powwow is a combination parade, party, family reunion, competition, and not-to-be-missed social event steeped in tradition and a rich heritage.

Historically, the word "powwow" had evolved from the Algonquian

"pauwau," meaning medicine man or spiritual leader. European settlers who witnessed medicine dances apparently failed to make the distinction between the medicine man and the larger gathering of separate events. Though reflecting many ancient traditions, the colorful displays and competitions at powwows today largely developed during this century. The larger events, like the Red Earth Festival, can be as much a form of entertainment as they are a form of cultural expression.

The Red Earth Festival is among many celebrations of native cultures that continue to thrive within the modern context. The festival is sponsored by Red Earth, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and continued development of Native American traditions and cultures. The organization also operates the Red Earth Indian Center, which includes permanent and traveling art and artifact exhibits and educational programs for all ages.

As for the streets of Oklahoma City, the usual drone of traffic and urban bustle has long since resumed. But underlying the city din is the anticipation of next June, when the drum will once again replace the sounds of traffic on downtown streets and the Red Earth Festival returns. ♦

## State Plant Health Director Races in Red Earth Run

By Margaret Clark, Oklahoma, VS

In tandem with the annual Red Earth Festival is the Red Earth Run, a 5-kilometer race through downtown Oklahoma City sponsored by the Oklahoma Indian Running Club. For the second year running, Jack Gobin, State Plant Health Director for Oklahoma, took to the streets as APHIS' representative.

"You meet a lot of great people at these events," says Gobin. "People come to have fun, and their families and friends cheer them on--it's a real nice group."

Gobin, who took up running as a way to stay in shape and relieve stress, runs 3 to 5 miles a day. He decided to enter the race for the first time last year. His repeat performance in this year's race placed him

154th out of 360 entries and bettered his previous race time by 20 seconds. Although Gobin tried to drum up support among his colleagues to enter this year's team competition, most were content to enjoy less strenuous festival activities. Gobin plans to run in next year's race as well and is still working on recruiting an APHIS team for the event. ♦



APHIS PHOTO BY MARGARET CLARK

PPQ's Jack Gobin crosses the finish line at the 1994 Red Earth Run.



## American Indian Tribes Ask for Help in Controlling Wildlife

By Tom Cramer, Operational Support, VS

In carrying out their mission to help citizens live with wildlife, ADC employees in different parts of the country have often gone onto the reservations of American Indians at their request. Over the years, ADC has been invited to work at more than 60 reservations. In recognition of American Indian Heritage month, four ADC employees recount their experiences working with American Indian tribes.

### Fort Apache

ADC employee Duane Nashio, Sr., is an American Indian. He's a White Mountain Apache who, since a small boy, hunted in the White Mountain region of Arizona. It was natural for him to choose a career in which he could spend most of his time outdoors working with wildlife.

Nashio is stationed on the 1.7-million-acre Fort Apache Reservation where he was born and raised. He is responsible for controlling animal damage throughout the entire reservation in central and eastern Arizona. Because of the enormity of this territory, Nashio often spends 2 weeks at a time camping out in some remote corner of the wilderness.

"One of my main jobs is to try to keep the Apaches' cattle safe from coyotes," says Nashio. "Right now, the tribe's herd is grazing in the high country, but when the snow starts, the herd will move down into the lower grazing lands. Usually, coyotes working in pairs will pick off young calves because they're easier prey than grown animals."

Coyotes are not the only predators that are a problem for the Apache.

"Recently, I got a call that a mountain lion had been spotted in a residential area," says Nashio. "It must have just been passing through, though, because my dogs and I found only his tracks. I told residents that I'll continue to check the area just to make sure the lion doesn't return."

### Bad River

American Indians in Wisconsin may not have to contend with mountain lions, but controlling bears around human habitats also has its challenges.

"We have a healthy population of bears here in Wisconsin," said Walter Follis, an ADC specialist stationed in Brule, WI. "A bunch of them were causing problems at residences on the Bad River Reservation. They weren't just raiding garbage cans or dumpsters at night. They would actually come into peoples' yards and onto their porches in broad daylight looking for food."

Bears get used to people real quick. They're really very docile

animals, but it's hard to convince people of that when they're staring at a bear on their back porch.

"The Chippewa Tribal Council asked us to come over and help them out. The tribe didn't have any live-bear traps of their own, so they asked us to tackle the bear problem while they built some traps."

I wound up trapping and relocating five black bears," says Follis. "When I tried dropping them off 20 miles away, they would always find their way back, so I had to let them go at least 30 miles away."

The Chippewa have since built three bear traps and are now managing their bear situation without assistance from ADC.



APHIS PHOTO BY BENNETT COSAY

Duane Nashio Sr., a White Mountain Apache and an ADC specialist stationed at the Fort Apache Reservation in Arizona, prepares a snare for a predator that has been killing his tribe's cattle. The snare is effective in capturing both bears and mountain lions.



## Martha's Vineyard

In the spring of this year, the Wampanoag Tribe on Martha's Vineyard had another kind of animal problem. Not lions or coyotes or bears, but birds--hungry cormorants that were eating so many herring that it was putting a noticeable dent in the tribe's fishing income.

Laura Henze, ADC State Director for Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, says that earlier this year, a member of the Wampanoag tribe asked for help in dealing with the cormorants.

"The tribal member said there were about 200 of them near the tribe's pond," says Henze. "The herring, which move upstream from the Atlantic Ocean during early spring and summer, swim through the pond on their way to their spawning grounds. The cormorants had strategically placed themselves at the entrance to the pond and were picking herring out of the water by the thousands.

"So we went out there to look at the situation. We considered using bird exclusion measures, such as putting up netting over the stream and the pond, but we decided that this might affect the herrings'

movement upstream. We ended up recommending the use of shellcrackers. Shellcrackers are basically firecrackers that you shoot out of a shotgun. They make an incredibly loud "boom."

"At first the shellcrackers worked," says Henze. "But then the birds got used to the noise. We'd fire a shellcracker, and the birds would move a short distance from the pond. In a little while, they'd be back again.

"So now, the Wampanoag, ADC, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service are investigating other strategies to convince the cormorants to do their fishing elsewhere. We have some time," says Henze. "The herring don't start running again until March."

## Pearl River

Coyotes can kill your cattle, bears will tip over your garbage cans, and birds will eat all your herring. But down on the Pearl River Reservation in Mississippi, the Choctaw Indians were contending with a creature that was literally putting the tribe underwater.

"A few years ago, the beavers in the Pearl River Community got overindustrious and built enough

dams to flood 3,000 acres of prime Choctaw timberland," says Martin Lowney, ADC State Director in Virginia, who was working for ADC in Mississippi at that time. "The Choctaw asked ADC to help them in managing their beaver population, so we began a 2-year program with them."

"The Choctaw wanted us to teach them how to manage the situation for themselves," Lowney explains. "It was a serious situation, because timber production is one of their main sources of income, and fishing, a favorite source of recreation, was no longer possible. So many of their roads were underwater that the people could no longer get to their ponds.

"Each week I would teach two different Choctaws how to catch beaver," recalls Lowney. "Later, I found a private company that taught them how to use explosives to remove the beaver dams."

"At the conclusion of the 2-year program, the Choctaws were able to set up their own forest management corporation," Lowney says. "They've since branched out and are now managing timber and beaver in several surrounding counties." ♦

## With Touch Screen, Federal Job Listings Are at Your Fingertips

By Tom Cramer, Operational Support, VS

Looking for a Federal job? In room 229 of the Federal Building in Hyattsville, MD, there's a touch-screen computer that serves as a Federal Job Information Center. The computer is a donation from the Office of Personnel Management. By just touching the screen and following the simple directions that pop up, you'll be able to scan job listings not just for USDA but for the entire Federal Government.

The search is not tedious or time-consuming; you don't have to look at every job out there. The computer helps you pinpoint the specific career area you're interested in, so the whole process takes only a few minutes. And the listings are updated every night!

If you need help with the touch screen or have questions about it, just ask M&B's Human Resources Division employees Angela Kelly (left) or Antoinette Hawkins. They're experts at the touch screen! ♦



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

# Community and HRD Offer Help With Latchkey Children

By Ann Mahaney, Resource Management Staff, IS

Many working parents today can't be home when their children arrive home from school. To help parents who are considering or already are letting their children arrive home alone, M&B's Human Resources Division cosponsored the seminar "LatchKey/Self-Care Program" on September 21, 1994.

About 65 employees attended this seminar sponsored by the National Center for Health Statistics; Financial Management Services; Agricultural Research Service; and several APHIS organizations, including the Women's Advisory Committee, the Headquarters' Safety and Health Council, the Work-Family-Life Council, the Women's Information Network, and the Work Force Diversity Steering Committee.

The seminar was in two segments. Mary Shephard from the Work and Family Institute, whose purpose is to involve the community in developing parent and family programs in the work place, addressed leaving children alone in "Home Alone: Preparing Your

Child for Self Care." Shephard communicated information on topics such as risks involved, emotional maturity, physical and safety issues, and the use of positive and negative feedback from latchkey children. She also provided general legal information and telephone numbers for specific jurisdictions for parents who want to get additional information.

The second segment was a panel presentation followed by a discussion period. Panelists were Heather Healy, Employee Assistance Program; Katie Pennick, Phone Friend; and William Murray, City of Seat Pleasant Police Department.

Healy stressed the need to start preparing children early to develop the skills and maturity to become a latchkey person.

Pennick summarized the Phone Friend concept. This program provides support or companionship for those children who are on their own after school. Although this program was initiated in the District of Columbia, children from the entire metro area call the

hotline number. Most of the callers are lonely, have concerns or questions on homework, or want to share their experiences of the day.

Murray talked about the police-friendly programs he is trying to implement within surrounding communities. He suggested having home security checked by local police and fire representatives and talked about the legal complications of having weapons in the home. He also discussed problems, especially those involving drugs and sex, connected with having friends of children in the home unsupervised.

The seminar representatives left a number of pamphlets and publications as well as telephone numbers. Employees wanting this additional information can call Ray Nosbaum, Work-Family-Life coordinator, on Area Code (301) 436-4989. The program was also videotaped and made available to various field locations. A video is kept at the headquarters' office; contact Nosbaum to borrow a copy. ♦



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

Hyattsville, MD, employees listen to a panel of community experts talk about latchkey children. From left to right are Carmen Queen-Hines, M&B; Cindee Dunn, M&B, and her children Jamahl and Kevin; and Jennifer Russo and Lynn Thomas of BBEP.



# Awards and Recognitions

**Director Named Entomologist of the Year:** The Florida Entomological Society has presented this award to **Ernest Delfosse**, director of the National Biological Control Institute, for his service to entomology, biological control, and integrated pest management. In addition to his position in APHIS, Delfosse maintains active membership in the Society. At various times, he has served as treasurer/business manager; member of the executive, student awards, and publications committees; and chair of the annual meeting. He has also presented numerous scientific papers to the Society.

**OPM Recognizes the Work-Family-Life Program:** To encourage establishment and improvement of work and family programs in Government, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has presented the first annual Director's Award for Outstanding Work and Family Programs to APHIS and two other Federal organizations for their innovative and effective work and family programs. OPM publicizes exemplary programs so they can serve as models for other Federal agencies. The reasons OPM chose APHIS include its agencywide WFL Council, its work with supervisors to create a flexible work environment, its promotion of flexplace, its 19-page multicolored booklet describing

options available to its workers, and its pilot test of child- and adult-care services for employees in Southern and Western States.

**Veterinary Medical Association Honors VMO:** This past summer the North Idaho Veterinary Medical Association presented retired APHIS veterinary medical officer **George Oakshott** with the George Oakshott Award. While the group initially presented this award to Oakshott himself for exceptional lifetime service to veterinary medicine, the association will present this award annually to someone making outstanding contributions to the veterinary profession. A commemorative plaque describing the award is now on display at the University of Idaho.

**Hawaii Honors PPQ Officer:** **George Muneoka**, a PPQ officer at Honolulu International Airport, received Hawaii's First Lady's Outstanding Volunteer Award for his volunteer work at Hawaii State Hospital this past year. As a regular volunteer at the hospital, Muneoka provides socializing opportunities and a recreation partner for mentally ill patients. Muneoka works 2 hours twice a week at the hospital, where he's appreciated for his long, regular service and caring attitude. "It's nice to get recognized," Muneoka comments, "but most people don't

do it for that. They do it for personal satisfaction."

**NVSL Gives Annual Women's History Awards:** This past spring, the Federal Women's Program Committee of the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) honored four women for individual achievements, demonstrated leadership, and for inspiring pride in women's past and hope for their future. The women honored were **Joan Arnoldi**, director of the NVSL at Ames, IA; **Janice Miller**, veterinary medical officer at the National Disease Center; **Corrie C. Brown**, head of the pathology section of the Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory; and Judy Vance, a professor at Iowa State University. The honorees received a certificate of appreciation and a Susan B. Anthony silver-dollar pendant.

**School Board Honors REAC Investigator:** The Board of Education of DeWitt Public Schools in DeWitt, MI, has named **Tom Rippy** its 1994 Citizen of the Year. Rippy, who is REAC's senior investigator for the State of Michigan, has given his spare time and energy to the public school system in a variety of ways, including negotiating a liaison with the United Way for the school system's foundation. In addition Rippy has

*(See RECOGNITION on page 15)*

## PESTS from page 7

Detection Program of the Northeastern Region has become a model for revising and expanding exotic pest-detection activities in other PPQ regions. Guidelines developed by the committee are now used by the agency and by State cooperators for determining the highest priority exotic pests for which surveys are needed and also for determining how, when, and where such surveys should be conducted. ♦

Team member **Steven Passoa** examines vegetation. Insect survey work is hard because there are more insects than hands to collect and analyze them.



APHIS PHOTO BY CARLOS MARTINEZ



## RECOGNITIONS from page 13

participated in campaigns that have helped pass millage and bond proposals in the district, and in the strategic planning process for the DeWitt schools. "Whatever I can do to make it better for the kids is what I'm after," Rippy says.

**PPQ Team Wins Los Angeles Interagency Trophy:** Federal Inspection Service (FIS) agencies at the Los Angeles International Airport find cooperation in the clearance area easier because they spend Thursday afternoons off the job bowling on an FIS league together. The seven U.S. Customs and Immigration teams couldn't stop the single APHIS team in the 1994 season. PPQ employees **Jim Eddy**, **Lorna Bunten**, and **Dave Thompson** won 38 games and took home the first-place trophy.

**Department Taps Federal Women's Program (FWP) Manager:** The FWP program managers of USDA agencies unanimously

elected APHIS national FWP manager **Barbara Patterson** president of the USDA FWP Managers' Council. Beginning in October, Patterson became responsible for presiding over all USDA FWP Council meetings. Other new duties include serving as the Council's liaison with the Departmental FWP Manager and key USDA management officials and serving on the USDA Civil Rights Leadership Council.

**Fifty Employees Get Recognition for Community Service:** For their participation in the national Partnership-in-Education Program during the 1993-94 school year, Acting Administrator Lonnie King recently recognized 50 Hyattsville, MD, employees. The employees participated in the program by mentoring and advising students from four nearby public schools in English, math, and science areas. Remarkable on the substantial impact that the program has had

on participating students, the vice principal of Hyattsville Middle School said, "I can point to better attendance and grades from the students who participate in this program."

**Peru Honors PPQ Officer.** Last spring while IS Deputy Administrator Alex Thiermann was in Peru, he accepted a special award for PPQ officer **Tom Arkle**, who is stationed at Hawaii International Airport. Arkle was recognized for assisting the local industry while conducting preclearance inspection of mangos during an IS detail 2 years earlier in northern Peru. He got four different plants to work together and accept new rules for inspecting hot-water-dipped mangos. Arkle was instrumental in ensuring a successful mango export season for the Peruvians. The award included a certificate and medal from the Ministry of Agriculture of Peru. ♦

## Secretarial Focus

### The Importance of Training

By Lisa Phelps, M&B, and Carrie Davis, ADC

Training is a valuable tool for success in the workplace. Secretaries can attend different types of training programs to advance their knowledge in specific areas. Taking advantage of different types of training is healthy for the mind. Moreover, when the secretary is learning, the office is more productive.

A person who takes the initiative to get training before starting a new job is going to have an increased sense of self worth and confidence. Also, training saves the time of another person in the office who would otherwise have to show the new employee office procedures. An employee who has had training will already know most procedures and formats used in offices.

Changing technology is another reason why training is important. Someone who knows how to type only on a typewriter is severely

limited in today's workplace. If a document has been done wrong, then the employee has to type the whole thing over. But if a document is prepared and saved in the computer, the text can be edited quickly. All the special functions on the computer help the employee finish the project fast and move on to other projects. A supervisor appreciates an employee who can get a lot done during the day.

An individual should continue to learn. No one knows everything there is to know about his or her job. Being knowledgeable about the jobs of others in the office also helps an employee handle emergencies.

Training helps a person to explore new options. Your office may be responsible for work that you really enjoy doing but have never had the opportunity to try. Training allows you to try out new skills.

Training courses say a lot about an individual. When a manager sees on an application that a person has participated in training classes, the manager can tell that the applicant cares about his or her job and wants to learn more about it. People everywhere have chances to take training seminars but turn them down because they feel they already know enough about their jobs. Courses can always help you. Even if you are familiar with the material, it can refresh your memory or teach you a new way of doing something.

Learning, advancing, and growing needs to come from you. You have to want to learn in order for training to be effective. ♦

*Are you interested in contributing your thoughts to Secretarial Focus? If so, contact Linda Story, Program Manager for Operation Jumpstart. 301-436-5551*



# APHIS 1994 Calendar of Events

## NOVEMBER

- 8-10 Animal Health Institute/Veterinary Biologicals Section, NVSL (VS)
- 9-10 Workforce Planning group, NVSL (VS)
- 9-11 Future Farmers of America (R&D)
- 10-11 The Science of Overabundance: The Ecology of Unmanaged Deer Populations (ADC)
- 10-12 First International Congress on Conservation and Management of Game Birds and Mammals (ADC)
- 12-13 Brucellosis Research Conference, NVSL (VS)
- 12-14 American Leptospirosis Research Conference, NVSL (VS)
- 13-18 Annual Meeting, American Society of Agronomy (OA/NBCI)
- 13-18 Foreign Animal Disease Diagnosticians Seminar, NVSL (VS)
- 14-15 Conference of Research Workers in Animal Disease, NVSL (VS)
- 14-18 California Food Safety meeting (R&D)
- 14-18 Field Servicing Office Quality Week (FSO)
- 15-16 Aircraft Resource and Utilization Management Team A-76 Training (M&B)
- 15-17 TMT and Plant Board meeting (PPQ)
- 15-17 Florida Area Work Conference, Southeastern Region (VS)
- 15-17 APHIS Reinvention Forum (PPD)
- 15-18 FAD Seminar, Central Region (VS)
- 16 Interagency Regulatory Colloquium: "Regulatory Effectiveness" (PPD)
- 16-17 USDA/1890 Capacity Building Grants Workshop (R&D)
- 16-18 Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals meeting (REAC)
- 16-19 Fifth Annual International Meeting on Rabies Control in the Americas—Coping with Invading Rabies Epizootics (ADC)
- 17 Aircraft Resource and Utilization Management Team Task Force meeting (M&B)
- 18 Last day of New Officer Training Course (PPQ)
- 29 EEO Advisory Committee meeting begins, Western Region (VS)
- 29-30 Native American Program Managers Workshop (CREC, VS)
- 30 Tennessee State/Federal Work Conference Begins, Southeastern Region (VS)
- 30 APHIS Information Resource Management meeting (OA)
- 30 PPQ Training Advisory Group meeting begins (R&D)

## DECEMBER

- 1 EEO Advisory Committee meeting concludes, WRO, Western Region (VS)
- 1 PPQ Training Advisory Group meeting concludes (R&D)
- 1-2 Office for Protection From Research Risks/NIH "New Frontiers in Surgery" conference (REAC)
- 4-7 56th Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference (ADC)
- 4-8 First International Symposium Veterinary Biologicals, "The Next Step in International Harmonization" (VS)
- 5-7 Conference: "Managing Process Analysis & Redesign Projects in Government" (PPD)
- 5-9 International Services Management Team Meeting (IS)
- 6-7 USDA Food Safety Research workshop (ARS, FSIS, APHIS)
- 6-7 Regional Directors' meeting (IS)
- 6-8 Administrative Systems Seminar for Program Managers (FSO)
- 6-9 Intercultural Communication & Negotiation Course, Japan-China (R&D)
- 7 APHIS Technical Review Board meeting (M&B)
- 7-8 Mississippi Area EEO/Safety & Health Training, Southeastern Region (VS)
- 7-8 Safety & Health Council meeting, Western Region (VS)
- 8-9 Scientists Center for Animal Welfare/University of Texas "Current Issues & New Frontiers in Animal Research" (REAC)
- 9 Mississippi Area State/Federal Work Conference, Southeastern Region (VS)
- 12 MIS Reference File Oversight committee (ADC)
- 13-17 Entomological Society of America (OA/NBCI)
- 14 Interagency Regulatory Colloquium: "Designing Regulatory Penalties" (PPD)
- 21 APHIS Information Resource Management meeting (OA/VS)
- 12 MIS Reference File Oversight committee (ADC)
- 13-17 Entomological Society of America (OA/NBCI)
- 14 Interagency Regulatory Colloquium: "Designing Regulatory Penalties" (PPD)
- 21 APHIS Information Resource Management meeting (OA)

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